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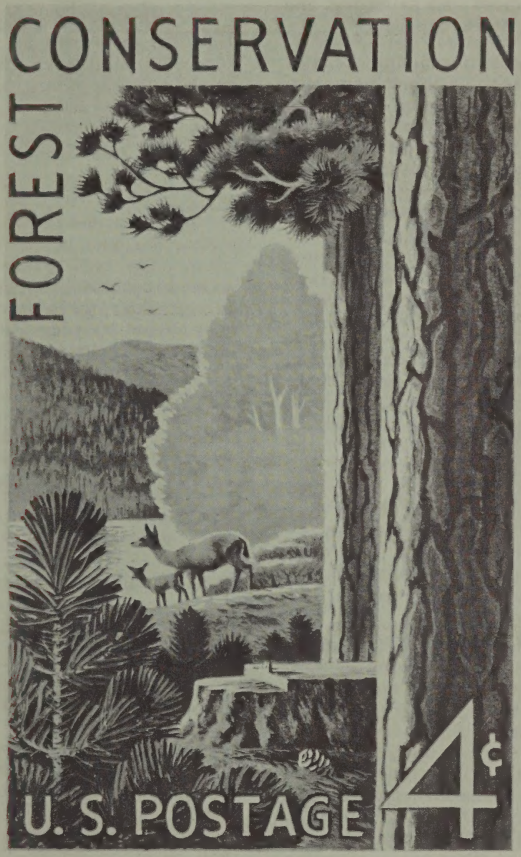
Merry Christmas



Happy New Year

NATURE CONSERVANCY 2015 BUNKER HILL RD. WASHINGTON 18, D.C.

MICHIGAN'S PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS THREATENED

The threatening clouds of commercial development and despoliation have gathered above Porcupine Mountain State Park in Michigan.

This tract of 58,000 acres on the south shore of Lake Superior is the largest roadless state park in the United States. It was purchased in 1944 after a long and determined fight, led by the Save-The-Porcupines Association (organized in 1941). In its efforts, the Association had the support of leading conservationists throughout the country. The Michigan State Legislature appropriated a million dollars for its purchase. In addition, certain Federal lands were traded for State lands.

The park was set aside as a wilderness area, to be administered by the Michigan State Conservation Commission. It was to be kept roadless and primitive, and to serve permanently as a living forest museum.

The park contains the biggest remaining stand of virgin hardwood - hemlock forest in North America (some 45,000 acres), unmarred by logging operations or fire. It offers the finest mountain scenery between the Adirondacks and the Black Hills, good fishing lakes, mountain rivers that supply excellent trout fishing, and an abundance of deer, bear, grouse and other game. The wilderness conditions and plentitude of wildlife make it a paradise for the sportsman seeking an off the beaten track, as well as for hikers and those who enjoy untouched wilderness for its own sake. Up to the present, development has been limited to border roads, a system of trails, camping shelters, and a ski area.

Now, however, copper mining interests have applied to the State Conservation Commission to grant them leases to both upland and offshore lands for mining operations. About 900 acres of park land is involved. A complicating factor is that, in some sections of the park, the companies hold mineral rights and the State only surface rights. Associated with the operations would be spoil-banks for the vast amount of debris taken from the workings under the lake, a smelter and reduction work, power lines and other utilities, a net work of roads, and all the various other structures and developments associated with the industrial program.

Perhaps of equal significance to the invasion of the Park is the probability of a smelter. Operation of such a plant in America, has, in the past, always been associated with widespread damage to vegetation. The sulfur released to the air combines with the moisture in the leaves and stems to form sulfuric acid, while the gas itself is poisonous to plants. Fifty thousand acres of vegetation around Ducktown, Tennessee has changed from forest to a man made desert. The smelters at Trail, British Columbia, killed the forest and all vegetation for miles in the State of Washington. Similar situations have developed in California, Arizona, Montana, and elsewhere as a result of smelter operations despite continuing efforts to control or dissipate the fumes. A smelter operation near the Park could be a major disaster that would require centuries to overcome.

The poisonous waste materials must be disposed of. Vegetation will reclaim the spoil banks only after a tremendously long period of time. It has been suggested these waste materials might be dumped into Lake Superior. Debris from strip mines near Chicago will not be fully reclaimed for a century or more. The copper mine debris will be regenerated at a far slower rate. But no serious study has been made of the possible effects of such disposal on aquatic life, water supplies, beaches and shorelines.

Proponents for the commercial leasing of these park lands argue that mining operations will promote the economic welfare of the area, now depressed by lack of other resources, through monies paid in wages, taxes, and royalties to the local county and State. This may be true, but when the copper runs out the mining ghost town -- not an unfamiliar sight in other parts of Michigan -- will appear.

Proponents for the industry have neglected to advertise that there will be several years of exploration before a decision is reached as to the developments to be made, nor that mining operations in this very low grade ore will guarantee regular or systematic operation. Most marginal mines, as this one is believed to be, are among the very first to feel the effects of market changes.

The income-bearing possibilities of this park, however, should not by any means be the primary consideration. The park possesses immeasurable wealth not to be accounted in terms of dollars and cents: its scenic grandeur, the physical and mental benefits to be derived from its recreational and relaxational opportunities, the precious solitude of its wilderness, its fine representation of Michigan's flora and fauna (including the last remnants of some vanishing species). These values, economic and otherwise, are permanent -- so long as the park is protected against encroachment and exploitation.

Nature Conservancy is opposed to any commercial invasion of park areas, and believes the loss of even a part of this wild area to commerce must be averted. This is in direct opposition to the stand taken by the Conservation Department which believes that the mining is justified so long as the revenues to the State are earmarked for further State Park development.

Any proposed commercial use of the Porcupine State Park is a threat not only to this one park, but constitutes a threat to all parks throughout our nation. Any such proposed use of a State Park gives heart to all those who, for some commercial purposes, would invade other of our parks, whether they be National, State, or local. This is just another effort to invade for commercial or industrial purposes, areas that have been dedicated for public recreational purposes. The exploiters will never be satisfied until they put a dollar value on every acre of land so they may show that recreational uses, natural area uses, wild life preserves, bird sanctuaries, and the like are uneconomic. But, to whom? Are you interested? If so, write the State Conservation Commission, Lansing 26, Michigan. And, do it soon!

ARE PRAIRIE GRASSES SAFE?

The price of preservation is eternal vigilance!

Nature Conservancy has worked hard to preserve Tucker Prairie near Columbia, Missouri, because it is an outstanding bit of unplowed prairie land. As a result of the various efforts, this 160-acre precious piece of sod was acquired by the University of Missouri. Hardly had the ink dried on the agreement when it was discovered that the State Highway Department was to build Interstate Route 70, a part of the new main Federal Highway program, through the property. Nature Conservancy launched a bitter protest against this destruction and sought to have the road relocated. Similar action was taken by many other organizations within and without the State. But, too late: the road location was in final stages.

After much discussion, the original destruction of about twenty acres has now been reduced materially. One side road has been eliminated, the sod on the right of way is to be preserved and replanted on the new road strips as far as it will go. This will minimize the losses and preserve some of the sod though it may take centuries for the soil to regain its original characteristics.

Where roads are concerned, it is important that the fight against them must be taken at the time of the first location survey, and not at the time when the first bulldozer makes its appearance. Then, it's usually too late.

Tucker Prairie is a wonderful piece of ground. Although part of it has been grazed and so excessively that weeds have entered the stand, the soil is still intact. With care and moderate use, the original species will again recapture the land. There are few natural grassland areas left. Most of the original areas in our prairie and plains regions have been plowed. All have been heavily grazed. A few still remain in our midwestern states. Every possible encouragement looking toward their preservation should be taken, as plowing ruins them.

In the mountain areas and in the west, most of our grassland areas have been seriously damaged if not ruined by excessive grazing and mismanagement. Many of our native species could not stand the abuse and have been replaced by poorer foreign species. Thus, the foxtail, an almost worthless Mediterranean grass, has replaced our nutritious grasses over millions of acres of our western ranges. In California, almost all of the once abundant native grasses of the central valleys have gone the way of the dodo and passenger pigeon.

Even today, overgrazing on western ranges is destroying the cover on millions of acres of public lands whether public domain, Taylor Grazing District lands, or those in the National Forests. Although progress has been made in reducing the damage both as to rate and amount, losses continue. Even within the western national parks, there has been material damage to the meadows and grassland vegetation because of the early-day inroads made by cattle and sheep that could be counted by the million. Most grazing in our national parks is now well on its way out and, in some parks, has been completely eliminated.

In natural areas within national forests and some other public land units, grazing and overgrazing is still a problem. Little if any fencing is possible and the permitted sheep and cattle have not yet learned to read the signs, "Keep Off the Grass." Local officials read but do little about it. Frankly, they just are not as much interested as many would have us believe. Even the scientific staff associated with the national forests make only mild and ineffective protests against misuse of natural areas set aside primarily for their use. And, there are but few natural areas set aside in the range areas--the stockmen are against them; their livestock needs the feed.

NA LAUU

Recently, George C. Munro, a member of Nature Conservancy for many years, had the rare pleasure of witnessing a long-held dream come true -- at least partially.

The Governor of Hawaii set aside 9-1/2 acres on the slopes of Diamond Head as Na Laau Hawaii Arboretum -- a preserve for the low-level, dry-land plant life of the Islands. The tract now becomes a Territorial park under the jurisdiction of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Munro, ninety-two but agile, has championed for many years -- as naturalist and agriculturalist -- the conservation of Hawaiian wildlife. Particularly, he has been concerned for fast-disappearing native plant life, which has been steadily loosing ground in its battle against the bulldozer. Seeding and cultivating, constantly begging the support of civic organizations -- Mr. Munro has fought a long and hard campaign.

Diamond Head at one time was a natural refuge for wild birds. So were the swampy Honolulu plains. And Hawaii's mountain slopes were lush with native vegetation. But draining and grazing have exacted a drastic toll.

"Few people in Hawaii realize the extent to which cultivation, grazing, building, and competition from exotics are exterminating our native plants," Mr. Munro laments. "My thirty-four years experience in Hawaii of making botanical collections and trying to save native plants from extinction resulted in my decision to attempt to lay a foundation on the mountainside for a "living museum" of our dryland plants, after the ideal of The Nature Conservancy."

Na Lauu? "Belonging to trees and plants."

* * * * * *

MOSS LAKE NATURE SANCTUARY in Allegany County, N. Y., was formally dedicated on June 21, 1958. The Board of Assessors in Caneadea has informed us that the sanctuary is now tax exempt. This fine preserve is an excellent example of what devoted nature lovers can accomplish when they band together in their common cause.

FOREST STAMP HONORS CONSERVATION

Issued just in time for your Christmas mailing, complete with doe and fawn, is the new 4-cent Forest Conservation stamp -- fifth in the conservation series. Printed in three colors, gold, green, and brown, the stamp is one of the most colorful and attractive of the year.

All major aspects of forest conservation are represented. Two huge pines tower above a woodland vista: young pines recall the importance of new growth; the doe and her fawn the value of forests as a shelter for wildlife; a lake and forested hillside the role of trees in protecting watersheds. Our hardwoods are represented by the yellow foliage of the aspen-like trees in the background. A pine stump symbolizes the harvesting of mature timber under scientific management.

The stamp was placed on sale October 27th, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Theodore Roosevelt, one of the early leaders in the conservation movement.

1958 also marks several other significant anniversaries, including that of the Conference of Governors which inaugurated conservation as a national policy 50 years ago.

Be sure to get a supply of the new stamp at once for your 1958 Christmas cards. And tell your friends and neighbors to do likewise.

Next year's conservation stamp will advertise soil conservation.

MT. MANSFIELD IS SAFE

Last summer the U. S. Air Force and the Army disclosed a plan to build a transmitter and other facilities atop Mt. Manshield, Vermont. Included also was the construction of an access road along the ridge of the mountain. The installations threatened to mar, if not

Last summer the U.S. Air Force and the Army disclosed a plan to build a transmitter and other facilities atop Mr. Mansfield, Vermont. Included also was the construction of an access road along the ridge of the mountain. These installations threatened to mar, if not destroy, much of the natural beauty of this famous mountain and its equally famous profile. Alpine flora, peat bogs, and geological formations would have been affected. Long Trail, the wilderness foot path which has followed the Mansfield skyline for almost 50 years, and part of the Appalachian Trail, would have been relocated. No longer could visitors have stood on the highest point in the Green Mountain State.

Various Vermont citizens and organizations throughout the northeast initiated a movement to have these defense installations erected elsewhere. Dr. Richard Goodwin, then president of Nature Conservancy, led the Conservancy's efforts to prevent the despoliation of this area. It has recently been learned from Senator George D. Aiken that the Air Force has now eliminated the requirement for these facilities.

RECREATION RESOURCES RECOGNIZED

A National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission has been established by the Congress. Its purpose is to inventory our national recreational resources, predict what our recreational needs will be by 1976 and 2000, and recommend ways of fulfilling these future demands. The Commission's final report is to be filed by September 1, 1961.

The bipartisan commission is made up of 8 members of Congress and 7 citizens. A 25-person advisory council, representing various geographical areas, agencies and organizations, and recreational pursuits will guide and assist the commission. Those appointed are: Dean Samuel T. Dana, School of Natural Resources, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Mrs. Katherine Jackson Lee, member of the American Forestry Association Board of Directors, Peterboro, N. H.; Bernard L. Orell, vice-president of the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company, Tacoma, Wash.; Joseph W. Penfold, conservation director, Izaak Walton League of America, Washington, D. C.; Laurance S. Rockefeller, civic leader and conservation enthusiast, New York City; M. Frederik Smith, Council of Conservationists, public relations executive and conservation leader, New York City; and Chester S. Wilson, former commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Conservation, Stillwater, Minn. Mr. Rockefeller will serve as chairman.

A $50,000 appropriation has been set aside for the current fiscal year, out of a total authorization of $2.5 million.

These appointments are fairly representative of the many outdoor recreations and the resources upon which they are dependent. However, they do not fill Nature Conservancy with any great enthusiasm and certainly little really constructive can be expected from some who, though they may have reputations of a kind, have never demonstrated either great enthusiasm for recreation or vision in some of the fields of work in which they have been identified. The only hope of any major contribution from this group must lie in the 25-person Advisory Council and outsiders who will make their position known. No one in this group is known to be specifically interested in Natural Areas.

Some are inclined also to hail the list of members of Congress who have been named to the Committee. While some have demonstrated real interest in conservation matters, the interest of others is too casual for complacency. Those appointed from Congress include: Senators Clinton P. Anderson (N. M.), Richard L. Neuberger (Ore.), Arthur V. Watkins (Utah) and Frank Barrett (Wyo.) and Representatives Mrs. Gracie Pfost (Idaho), Al Ullman (Ore.), John P. Saylor (Pa.) and John J. Rhodes (Ariz.).

* * * * * *

Progress! Membership in the Nature Conservancy has increased 367 since the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1.

MENDOCINO DOUGLAS FIR

The Nature Conservancy has taken first steps toward acquiring a natural area in Mendocino County, California. This area of about 7,000 acres, contains a large area of old-growth douglas fir and a few redwoods. Mixed in with these are stands of oaks and chaparral.

One of the outstanding features of the area is an untouched watershed. In this day and age of civilization and development, an untouched watershed is indeed rare, especially when in a region where mills have moved because of lack of timber. Water in this creek is so pure that it can be used for domestic purposes without fear of any contamination.

About half of this proposed new natural area was acquired and protected against trespass of all kinds, by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Heath Angelo over a period of about 40 years. The other half which surrounds the Angelo property, is public domain land now administered by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management. If the area is acquired, it will be the largest unit in the natural area system of Nature Conservancy. Mr. and Mrs. Angelo have been members of the Conservancy for many years.

Arrangements for the acquisition of this unit are being made by the Western Advisory Board of which Dr. Curtis L. Newcomb of Lafayette, California is chairman.

PINE HILLS, INDIANA

A number of members, attending the annual meeting at Bloomington, Indiana this past August, visited the proposed Pine Hills Natural Area near Crawfordsville.

The area is unique. It contains a good stand of mixed hardwood trees and some conifers. One of the strange things about this area is a stand of old-growth beech on a rather narrow ridge composed of blocks of sandstone overlain by a very shallow soil. Associated with the beech is some hemlock.

Of even greater interest, were the cliffs. A meander of the stream has cut into both sides of a ridge so deeply that at one time, only a couple of feet of rock remained to separate the stream. Apparently as the water cut more deeply, harder rock was encountered so that the stream has veered away from the wall by several feet. The ridge across the top is very narrow, scarcely more than 3 feet at the narrowest part.

The young zoologists in the group regaled the party at lunch with their exhibits of several different kinds of snakes, salamanders, and other delectable specimens from the animal world.

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Nature Conservancy has recently been registered as a "foreign corporation" for the purpose of carrying on its activities in WEST VIRGINIA and ILLINOIS. Registration in other states where we are active is also in progress.

THOMPSON POND OPTIONS SIGNED

At the foot of wild, steep Stissing Mountain, near Pine Plains, New York, lies Thompson Pond. This marshy glacial lake is located only 100 miles north of New York City, in a setting of remarkable beauty.

Nature Conservancy recently signed options to purchase some 175 acres of this area to include the 80-acre pond and 95 acres of surrounding marsh and swampland. The Conservancy's action will preclude any potential threat that the pond will be dredged and its surrounding areas converted into a summer colony -- a fate that has befallen several other ponds in the vicinity.

Few marshes as extensive as the pond area remain in the Hudson valley, except along the river proper. Both the pond and its mountain sentinel remain entirely undeveloped, although agriculture and timber cutting have extensively modified the natural vegetation.

This tract can become a first-rate nature preserve. The area has long been famous in the valley region as a bird habitat, and it possesses many other botanical and biological features worth preserving. It has been used extensively by students from Vasser and other colleges.

A project committee appointed by the Eastern New York Chapter is seeking to meet a campaign goal of $35,000 necessary for completion of the purchase of this fine addition to the list of Nature Conservancy's accomplishments.

PERSONS AND PLACES

Ownership of the Quaker Hill property in Dutchess County, N. Y., passed to Nature Conservancy on June 9, 1958. This was a gift from the Aiken Hall Association. The 1,000-acre tract is to be known as "PAWLING NATURE PRESERVE."

Nature Conservancy has been named successor trustee to 11 acres of land near Beaumont, Texas. The tract, known as the WINIFRED TURNER NATURE SANCTUARY, has been granted to the Bruce and Bessie Reid Trust for East Texas Nature Preservation.

DR. WILLIAM A. NIERING of Connecticut College served during the past summer as consultant to the Park, Recreation and Open Space Project of the New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut Metropolitan Region. A major purpose of this project is identification of sites which should be preserved for conservation purposes. Dr. Niering is chairman of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association's Natural Areas Committee.

The Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game recently purchased three more parcels of land in OLD SAYBROOK, CONN., to add to its wildlife management areas. The last purchase totaled about 14 acres. Efforts are being made to acquire marshland along the shore of value to salt-water fishing, to the preservation of wildlife, and for protection against floods.

WHOPPING NUMBER OF WHOOPERS

Nine young whooping cranes, the highest number of young counted since the keeping of records began in the winter of 1938-1939, are now at their wintering grounds on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast. The previous high was the eight young reported in the fall of 1955.

There are 18 adult cranes on the refuge at the present time, making the total there 27. Twenty-six birds went north in the spring.

This could be a banner year for the whooping crane. If all 26 birds which went north return, the wild birds will total 35, to which must be added the six whoopers now in captivity -- for a grand total of 41. The previous high count since record keeping began was 34 birds in the winter of 1949-1950.

In 1938-1939 there were only 14 whooping cranes in existence. In 1940-1941, 26 were counted, but the following year the figure dropped to 15. In 1954-1955, there were 21 adults but no young ones on the refuge.

A STUMP PRESERVE AND A NATURAL AREA

The Michigan State Conservation Commission approved two moves at its October meeting which commemorate Michigan's once mighty stands of white pine.

A pine stump preserve was dedicated at the former townsite of Deward, northwest of Frederic, and a nature study area of virgin timber and grassland on Bois Blanc Island was set aside as a museum piece of the forests now gone.

The pine stump preserve contains many white pine stumps five feet in diameter, attesting to the tall timber that once thrived in this state.

The Deward tract is 43 acres in size and has long been a part of the AuSable state forest. It will be appropriately marked and kept as nearly as possible in its present condition.

CRANBERRY BOG PRESERVE GROWS

Nature Conservancy recently made a 9.5-acre addition to Cranberry Bog (Tannersville) in Pennsylvania. The new acreage is predominantly red maple bog forest with an admixture of hemlock and scattered large, white pines. Rhododendron carpets the entire area.

Located along the northwest side of the original 62.5 acre preserve, this extension serves as an excellent buffer zone and rounds out the Tannersville project.

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER.....

Having established three new chapters recently--Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Western Washington--Nature Conservancy now boosts a total of 11 chapters. In addition, charter applications have been received for creating two more chapters in California. Both have been in the process of organization.

The South California Coast chapter would cover Orange and San Diego counties. Mr. John W. Johnson is temporary chairman. Threatened destruction of the coastal salt-marshes near Newport inspired formation of this group.

The Southern California chapter would include the counties of Kern, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial. Chairman for the organizing group is Dr. Ralph M. Rutledge of Sunland.

WINTER MEETING AHEAD

A meeting of Nature Conservancy is planned for New York in early March. This evening meeting is being planned in connection with the North American Wildlife Conference. The program is being woven around the general topic of Natural Areas in relation to wild life. An afternoon meeting of the Board of Governors is also being scheduled for the same day.

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific objective is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and aesthetic values. They also provide a home for many living things that would otherwise be destroyed by our civilization.

The work of the organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946, the Ecologists Union was formed to take over the task. In 1950, the name was changed to The Nature Conservancy: incorporation in the District of Columbia took place in 1951.

Nature Conservancy now has a national membership of approximately 3,000. It operates through a series of Chapters, of which thirteen have been organized to date. It has acquired, by gift or purchase, 16 natural areas in six states. The area of these units is some 2,500 acres. They range in size from one acre to 1,000 acres. Nature Conservancy is now actively working toward the acquisition of four additional natural areas in three additional states, the total area of which is about 7,500 acres.

Nature Conservancy has also aided financially in the acquisition of six other natural areas in four states. These units are under the administration and protection of other organizations with whom Nature Conservancy has cooperated.

The members of The Nature Conservancy invite you to join in its work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. A contribution of $3 or more entitles you to annual membership, one of $100 or more to life membership and one of $1,000 or more to patron membership. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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